

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Working Group  
for  
Executive Committee for Highway Safety  
Meeting Minutes; Mtg. #8  
November 8, 2007**

**Location:**

NCDOT Large Conference Room, Room 280, 401 Oberlin Road @ 9:00 a.m.

**Working Group Members in Attendance:**

Greg Brew	Jeff Cox	Jason Galloway	Frank Hackney
Brad Hibbs	Daniel Keel	Greg Loy	Mary Meletiou
Leza Mundt	Jimmy Newkirk	Tom Norman	Pete Schubert

**Guests in Attendance:**

None

**Working Group Members Absent:**

Timothy Akers	Loretta Barren	Cliff Braam	James Dunlop
Vickie Embry	Margaret Landon	Tyler Meyer	Charlie Zegeer

**Scribe:**

Jeff Cox

**New Action Items:**

- 1. With support from ECHS chair Susan Coward a Task Force (to be appointed) on Pedestrian Policy will pursue policy revisions to the current Pedestrian Policy/Funding Guideline. Goal is for the Task Force to begin meeting in early 2008 to consider drafting a revised Pedestrian Policy for NCDOT by late 2008.**
- 2. Mary Meletiou and the Law Enforcement Education subcommittee, having secured inclusion of a curriculum in the 2009 Mandated In-Service Training for Law Enforcement, will continue development of a 2-hour module on bicycle and pedestrian safety and law. Course objectives are due on December 14<sup>th</sup>.**
- 3. Mary Meletiou will amend the draft strategy on Speeding in School Zones. The name of the strategy will change to *Improving School Zone Safety through Education and Law Enforcement Initiatives* and will include strategy in regard to obedience of school crossing guards. This will be presented at the next meeting of the BPWG.**
- 4. The DMV Drivers Handbook subcommittee is continuing to draft revisions for the DMV Drivers Handbook.**
- 5. Greg Loy to convene the Subcommittee on School Site Selection Issues to gather information and develop strategy to address bicycle and pedestrian safety issues resulting from current school site selection and design practices.**

**Ongoing Subcommittees**

- DMV Drivers Handbook subcommittee: Mary Meletiou (Chair), Tim Akers, Margaret Landon, Frank Hackney, and Pete Schubert.

- Law Enforcement Education subcommittee: Tim Akers (Chair), Mary Meletiou, Margaret Landon, Frank Hackney, and Pete Schubert.
- Subcommittee to propose strategy to Executive Committee to broaden Pedestrian Policy: Greg Brew (Chair), Vickie Embry, Daniel Keel, Mary Meletiou, Tom Norman, and Charlie Zegeer.
- Subcommittee to develop plan on school site selection issues: Greg Loy (Chair), Jeff Cox, Mary Meletiou, Leza Mundt, Tom Norman, and Pete Schubert.

## **Minutes:**

- The meeting began at approximately 9:00 a.m.

### **Task I – Welcome**

Tom Norman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

### **Task II – Introductions**

There were no guests and no new group members attended this meeting.

### **Task III – Discussion of Pedestrian Policy Review**

- Greg Brew reported on the progress of the Pedestrian Policy Subcommittee, giving a brief rundown of the history of NCDOT's pedestrian policy.
- Tom Norman reported that he had met with Susan Coward, Chair of the ECHS, and discussed forming a Task Force on Broadening NCDOT's Pedestrian Policy. She agreed that the Policy developed in 1993 needs to be expanded and updated and, noting that this would fit in well with the timing of NCDOT's look at its own efficiency and safety, gave us the green light to move forward.
- Tom feels that the Task Force, for efficiency, should have 25 or fewer members, including representatives from various divisions, branches, and units of NCDOT and representatives from MPOs, RPOs, other state agencies, and FHWA.
- The Task Force should start in the coming calendar year (2008) to address changes and finding of expanded role of NCDOT regarding pedestrian policy.
- Daniel Keel stated that recent legislation enables counties to address transportation issues including participating in the construction and maintenance of sidewalks.
- Tom noted that this gives us new opportunity to connect subdivisions to schools with sidewalks and trails in areas transitioning from rural to suburban.
- Mary Meletiou suggested that the Roadway Design Unit be made aware of the new policy changes through education initiatives. This could include training using "*Pedestrian Road Safety Audit Guidelines and Prompt Lists*". Links to this document will be sent by email to members of the Working Group. (This was sent to the group on Tuesday, November 13, 2007 at 9:11AM.)
- Frank Hackney questioned the timing of pursuing policy change in the midst of NCDOT's "Transformation" process.

- Tom responded that now is the perfect time for policy change so that it can become part of the “Transformation” process.
- Tom stressed that the major priority for our group is safety. North Carolina is one of 13 leaders in pedestrian crashes that have been designated as “Opportunity States” for addressing pedestrian issues. How do you meet priorities for safety when the current policy is 14 years old? NC is facing increasing urbanization, which brings increased challenges as well as opportunities for walking as an alternative for transportation.
- Frank asked what federal guidance do we have?
- Brad Hibbs replied that this Working Group is part of the federal plan. Developing a Strategy Plan is the key to the federal plan and a good policy is the highest level of strategy. What’s happening here to change policy is going to affect North Carolina pedestrians over the next many years. Gas prices may approach \$4.00/gallon soon and that may start to impact Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT). People are going to be more interested in alternative transportation modes like walking.
- Brad emphasized that the BPWG is “It” for this issue; pedestrian policy is not being discussed elsewhere in NCDOT. We see this as a special opportunity and accept the special responsibility to move in the right direction for saving lives.
- Greg Brew said that Roadway Design is still very much motor-vehicle-oriented. DOT is very much out of phase of what is expected by the fastest growing areas of North Carolina.
- Greg will convene the Subcommittee on Broadening NCDOT’s Pedestrian Policy in the coming weeks to begin forming the Task Force.

#### **Task IV – Discussion of Law Enforcement Education – Mary Meletiou**

- Mary Meletiou announced that the Joint Subcommittee on In-Service Training had awarded a slot on the 2009 Mandatory In-service Training for instruction on bicycling and pedestrian law and enforcement. The final result will be a two-hour module. Course objectives for the module are due on December 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Mary has found a training course in Wisconsin that can be adapted to develop the course objectives and, subsequently, the module itself.
- Mary said her plan will be to develop the module with 15 minute segments that can easily be broken out for use during Roll Call Meetings at various Sheriff’s and Police Departments throughout the state.
- Tom Norman said that inclusion of this subject matter into this mandatory training is evidence that these issues are resonating with the people.
- Mary will draft the objectives and distribute them to the subcommittee for comments before submitting them to the Academy for approval.

#### **Task V – Discussion of Speeding in School Zones – Mary Meletiou**

- Mary Meletiou mentioned that a draft strategy was submitted and tabled at a recent BPWG meeting. She said that she is still receiving comments for that draft.

- Mary Meletiou said that evidence shows that speeding in school zones is on the increase. Some communities are taking various actions.
- For instance, the Town of Cary has spent \$500,000 to put up flashing lights and increase enforcement in school zones.
- Her strategy is to work with cities amenable to reduced speed limits and increased enforcement in school zones.
- Another strategy of concern is the issue of motorists obeying school-crossing guards. Mary requested input on how to best address this issue in regard to the current draft strategy on speeding in school zones. Should we approve the current draft strategy and develop a separate one for school crossing guards? Should the two issues be combined into one strategy?
- Brad Hibbs suggested that we develop an umbrella and bullet the points to include the crossing guard strategy into the school zone speeding strategy.
- Jimmy Newkirk suggested that two closely related issues may be perceived as competing and the resulting confusion could cause neither proposal to win approval. He suggested they be combined.
- Frank Hackney suggested that the title of the current draft strategy be changed to “Improving School Zone Safety through Education and Law Enforcement Initiatives”. This is a title that can serve as an umbrella for both issues.
- The Working Group supported the changed language proposed by Frank and felt that the two issues can be addressed under that title.
- Mary will amend the current draft accordingly and resubmit to the BPWG at its next meeting.

## **Task VII – Status of Ongoing Action Items**

### **Driver’s Handbook Revisions**

- Mary Meletiou said that the tasks for this item are still to be done. The BPWG expressed general support for continued work on the revisions.

### **School Site Selection**

- Greg Loy said that he and Tom Norman had talked. He shared the notes that he had taken from their conversation.
- Greg proposed an analysis of existing representative schools, comparing those schools considered poorly sited with those considered well sited. The analysis should look into economic and social impacts of both groups of schools as well as how the policies and procedures that guided how the decisions were made.
- The goal of school site selections should be sustainable schools, especially when considering costs related to health and fitness vs. chronic disease associated with increasing obesity due to a lack of physical activity and other community costs, such as fuel, mileage, travel time, pollution, etc.
- Greg mentioned a study of how air pollution impacts schools in the Los Angeles area within 1000 feet of freeways.

- Leza Mundt in her role as Safe Routes to School Coordinator is learning the complexities of this issue. It's not just about location (schools in fringe areas or within the community). It involves community density. School size seems to be a significant factor in how well elementary students learn. Smaller schools are performing better. She suggested that the early focus be on the siting of elementary schools. When siting elementary schools, more consideration should be given to hidden costs to the community and to educating parents on the issues surrounding commuting to school.
- Pete Schubert suggested the effects of magnet and charter schools be studied also.
- Leza added that street connectivity is key to the issue of siting schools. Even if density is there, but there are many disconnected neighborhood cul-de-sacs and dead end streets, walking distances become longer and longer.
- Jimmy Newkirk offered that the use of schools for after-school and community functions also add to increased congestion on the roads near the school.
- Mary Meletiou said that studies are finding a variety of opinions among parents regarding what is safe and what is not safe. One mother may be so concerned about safety that she would never allow her kids to walk to school. Another mother might overlook any potential safety hazards to encourage her kids to walk to school.
- Leza said that statistics are showing that the kids who are the least likely to walk are from the least educated families with lower incomes.
- As she has looked at schools, Leza is seeing that usually there is just one big barrier or obstacle to overcome to make it safer for kids to walk to school.
- Pete reminded that past pedestrian policy (or lack thereof) has contributed to the problem.
- Mary suggested a look at warrants required by traffic engineers for various warning signs, signals, etc.
- Tom suggested that the Pedestrian Policy Group consider location of schools in regard to pedestrian crossings, etc. He has seen multiple places where pre-teen students cross multi-lane streets where drivers do not have visual cues and warnings to slow down.
- Frank asked about school bus routes in regard to unsafe bus stops. It was agreed that bus routing needs to be addressed in the school siting strategy.
- Greg said the Subcommittee on School Site Selection Issues would meet right after this BPWG meeting and perhaps again before the next BPWG meeting to gather information for well-researched decisions.

### **Task– Next Meeting Date**

**Our next meeting will be in the Large Conference Room at 401 Oberlin Road at 9:00 on Thursday, February 14th. (Room reservation is confirmed.)**

The meeting was adjourned at eleven.